Blood Bank

3557. SHRI I.D. SWAMI : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government and some of the State Governments have not been able to remove the deficiencies from their blood banks even after one year of the Supreme Court directions and 596 such blood banks are on the verge of closure;

(b) is so, the reasons for the failure of the Union Government and the State Governments to act on the orders of the Supreme Court; and

(c) whether Government propose to ensure the uninterrupted supply of blood to the needy people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) to (c) It is not true that 596 blood banks are on the verge of closure. The various deficiencies reported of such blood banks are in the process of rectification. As such Central Government had moved the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India to extend the time for grant of licences and the Hon'ble Supreme Court has extended the time limit for three months from 17th February, 1997. The extension of time was sought to ensure the compliance of one of the Supreme Court directions that only licensed blood banks should operate in the country. With this extension of time, it will be possible for more blood banks get themselves licensed so as to ensure availability of uninterrupted supply of blood to the needy people.

Historical Relics

3558. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN :
SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering to undertake archaeological excavation at Pillak and Boxanagar in the State of Tripura where there are immense possibilities of finding of rich historical relics;

(b) whether any steps have been taken towards this direction; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Archaeological Survey of India conducted exploration and excavation at these sites in 1948-85 and recovered important archaeological relics. There is no proposal to conduct further excavations.

[Translation]

Ajmer-Ahmedabad National Highway

3559. SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to construct four lanes on National Highway No. 8 on Ajmer-Byawar-Udaipur-Ratanpur-Ahmedabad Road by widening it; and

(b) if so, the time by which this work is likely to commence and completed?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal is at feasibility stage and hence it is too early to give details.

Subsidy on Pilgrimage

3560. SHRI VIJAY GOEL :
SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the total subsidy provided by the Government to Haj pilgrims during the last three years, year-wise and per capita details thereof;

(b) whether the amount of subsidy has been increased for the current year (1997);

(c) if so, the amount thereof and the reasons therefor;

(d) whether any subsidy is given to the pilgrims of Kailash Mansarovar also;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor;

(f) whether subsidy is provided to the pilgrims of any other Hindu pilgrimage; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) No subsidy is given directly to the Haj pilgrims. Government fixes a Haj pilgrim fare which is generally lower than the fare calculated on the basis of actual expenditure, the difference constituting the subsidy borne by the Government on account of Haj transportation arrangements and paid directly to the Air Charter. In addition, Government depute administrative and medical contingents (doctors and paramedics) to Saudi Arabia and also supply medicines and attendant medical facilities such as ambulances, camp dispensaries etc., to attend to the needs of the Haj pilgrims. Government subsidised travel of pilgrims to